FORM PTO-1390 (REV 11-98)	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 540-188
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371		U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 C.F.R. 1.5) 09/486183 Unknown
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/GB00/0286	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 2 February 2000	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 8 February 1999

TITLE OF INVENTION

FIBRE REINFORCED COMPOSITES

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US

GRAY

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. ☒ This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.

2. ☐ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.

3. ☒ This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).

4. ☐ A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.

5. A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
   - a. ☐ is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
   - b. ☒ has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
   - c. ☐ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).

6. ☐ A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).

7. ☐ Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).
   - a. ☐ are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
   - b. ☐ have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
   - c. ☐ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has **NOT** expired.
   - d. ☐ have not been made and will not be made.

8. ☐ A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).

9. ☒ An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).

10. ☐ A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

Items 11. To 16. Below concern document(s) or information included:

11. ☐ An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.

12. ☒ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.

13. ☐ A FIRST preliminary amendment.
    ☐ A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.

14. ☐ A substitute specification.

15. ☐ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.

16. ☐ Other items or information.

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 C.F.R. 1.5)	INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER
Unknown	PCT/GB00/0286	540-188

17. ☒ The following fees are submitted:

BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5):

-- Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO $970.00

-- International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO $840.00

-- International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2) paid to USPTO $760.00

-- International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) $670.00

-- International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) $96.00

	CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =	$ 970.00
Surcharge of $130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than ☐ 20 ☐ 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).	$ 0.00

CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED		NUMBER EXTRA	RATE			
Total Claims	13	-20 =	0	X	$18.00	$	0.00
Independent Claims	1	-3 =	0	X	$78.00		0.00
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS(S) (if applicable)				+$260.00		$	0.00
				TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =		$	**970.00**
Reduction by ½ for filing by small entity, if applicable. A Small Entity Statement must also be filed (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28).							0.00
				SUBTOTAL =		$	**970.00**
Processing fee of $130.00, for furnishing the English Translation later than ☐ 20 ☐ 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).					+		0.00
				TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =		$	**970.00**
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). **$40.00** per property					+	$	40.00
Fee for Petition to Revive Unintentionally Abandoned Application ($1,210 – Small Entity Fee = $605)						$	0.00
				TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =		$	**1010.00**
						Amount to be: refunded	$
						charged	$

a. ☒ A check in the amount of $1010.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.

b. ☐ Please charge my Deposit Account No. 14-1140 in the amount of $_____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this form is enclosed.

c. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 14-1140. A duplicate copy of this form is enclosed.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22201
Telephone: (703) 816-4000

SIGNATURE

Stanley C. Spooner
NAME

27,393 REGISTRATION NUMBER

February 23, 2000 Date

Fibre Reinforced Composites

This invention relates to fibre reinforced composites, in particular those used in high strength applications such as aircraft structures.

It is known to manufacture by pultrusion, composite structural members for use as skin stringers for aircraft wing and fuselage skins, for example. Such pultruded members are currently manufactured by drawing reinforcing fibres, such as carbon fibres, through a die, applying liquid plastics matrix material to the fibres, and curing or setting the whole to form a fibre reinforced composite structural member of the required cross-sectional shape and of indefinite length. Patent US 5,439,215 discloses a method for producing pultruded hockey sticks and similar products where the hockey stick shaft varies in flex from the upper portion of the shaft to the lower portion of the shaft by varying the rate of feeding fibres through the pultrusion machine.

There exists a requirement to provide structural members such as aircraft wing or fuselage skin stringers with strength characteristics which vary along their length. It is currently proposed to provide such a member with variable cross-section in order to achieve the variation in strength required. Unfortunately such changes in cross-sectional shape for pultruded members are not easy to achieve. Currently variable shape pultrusion dies are being investigated with a view to allowing changes in cross-sectional shape of the structural member along its length. It will be appreciated that such variable cross-section dies will be somewhat complex and possibly difficult to produce. In addition their reliability and/or longevity may be limited.

According to the present invention there is provided a method of producing a fibre reinforced composite by pultrusion having strength characteristics which vary along the length of the composite, the method including the steps of drawing through a pultrusion die a series of reinforcing fibres to form a pultruded fibre composite

product characterised by incorporating in the reinforcing fibres prior to the pultrusion step additional fibres, which may have a characteristic such as tenacity or modulus different from that of the said reinforcing fibres, in order to vary the strength characteristics of the final product along the said length substantially without altering

the cross-sectional area thereof, a curable or settable plastics matrix material being applied around the fibres and solidified by being cured or allowed to set to form the finished composite.

By "tenacity" is meant tensile strength per unit area of fibre. In this way a higher tenacity fibre may have a reduced cross sectional area compared with a lower tenacity fibre. By "modulus" is meant Young's modulus for the fibre concerned.

Preferably, the additional fibres are either spliced between discrete lengths of the reinforcing fibres, or interlaced or otherwise distributed amongst continuous said reinforcing fibres.

The fibres may be pre-impregnated with the plastics material before being drawn through the protrusion die. If the fibres are not pre-impregnated then a plastics material may be introduced amongst the fibres as they are drawn through the die. Where the plastics material is curable, the pultrusion die may be heated to effect curing or part curing of the plastics material.

The fibres may be in the form of individual strands, or may form woven and/or non-woven webs.

A method in accordance with the invention will now be described by way of example, and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic view of an apparatus for splicing fibres for use in a method in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2a is an alternative enlarged diagrammatic view of box A in Figure 1;

Figure 2b is an enlarged diagrammatic view of box A in Figure 1; and

Figure 3 is a diagrammatic view of a pultrusion apparatus for producing a fibre reinforced composite in accordance with the invention.

Figure 1 shows an apparatus for splicing fibres and comprises a substantially horizontal work bench 10, a source roll 12 of reinforcing fibres 14 and a product receiving roll 16.

Reinforcing fibres 14 are drawn off the source roll 12, across the work bench 10 and wound onto the product receiving roll 16.

Additional fibres 20 are provided which can either be spliced between lengths 26, 28 of the reinforcing fibres (Figure 2a) to provide an area 18 having a characteristic such as tenacity or modulus different from that of the fibres 14, or can be interlaced or otherwise distributed amongst the reinforcing fibres 14 (Figure 2b).

When the additional fibres 20, are spliced into the reinforcing fibres 14 as shown in Figure 2a, the ends of the fibres may either be knotted together or air blown so that the fibres become matted together to form a joint 22. It should be noted that the joint 22 so formed primarily allows continuity of the pultrusion process.

It should be further noted that it is preferable for the introduction of a change in fibre type to be phased over the predetermined area or areas 18. By phasing the introduction of the additional fibres, stress on individual joints between the fibres is spread over a greater area thus minimising stress concentration.

In Figure 2a it will be noted that the phased introduction leads to the additional fibres 20 meeting the reinforcing fibres 14 on an oblique plane 24 although it will be understood that other suitable phased introduction, e.g. a zig-zag, could be used.

The product receiving roll 16 is then transferred to a pultruding apparatus 30 as shown in Figure 3. The pultruding apparatus 30 includes supports (not shown) for a number of product receiving rolls 16. In the present example, four rolls 16 are carried by the supports. The modified fibres, indicated at 32, are drawn from the rolls 16 and aligned through guide vanes 34 and 36 so as to position them in a predetermined pattern.

The modified fibres 32 are then pulled through a pultrusion die 38. Resin 40 from a supply 41 is injected amongst the fibres 32 as they are drawn through the die 38 to produce a fibre reinforced composite 42 of substantially constant cross-sectional area. The fibre reinforced composite 42 is part drawn out through the die 38 by reciprocating caterpillar pullers 44.

Where the additional fibres 20 are distributed amongst the reinforcing fibres 14 as in Figure 2b there is a reduction in the ratio of fibre 32 to resin 40 content of the final composite 42 compared to the composition in which the fibres are spliced as shown in Figure 2a.

The fibres 32 may also be pre-impregnated with resin before drawing them through the pultrusion die 38. That may alleviate, or avoid altogether, the need to inject resin 40 amongst the fibres 32 as they are pulled through the die 38.

The fibres 32 may be in the form of a fabric, which may be woven and/or non-woven.

If the resin is curable, the pultrusion die 38 may be heated to effect curing or part curing of the resin.

In the present example, the plastics matrix material used is a resin, although it may also be any adhesive/matrix system.

The length of the predetermined area 18 along the fibres 14 can be selected as required.

The above methods enable the production of a fibre reinforced composite having variable strength characteristics along its length without alteration of the cross-sectional area of the pultruded composite.

Claims

1. A method of producing a fibre reinforced composite by pultrusion having variable strength characteristics along its length including the steps of drawing through a pultrusion die a series of reinforcing fibres to form a pultruded fibre composite product characterised by incorporating in the reinforcing fibres prior to the pultrusion step additional fibres having a characteristic different from that of the said reinforcing fibres in order to vary the strength characteristics of the final product substantially without altering the cross-sectional area thereof, a plastics matrix material being applied around the fibres and allowed to solidify to form the finished composite.

2. A method according to claim 1 in which the said characteristic is selected from the group fibre tenacity and fibre modulus.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2 in which the additional fibres are spliced between discrete lengths of the reinforcing fibres.

4. A method according to claim 1 or 2 in which the additional fibres are interlaced amongst continuous said reinforcing fibres.

5. A method according to any of claims 1 to 4 in which the plastics matrix material is applied to the fibres, within the die.

6. A method according to any of claims 1 to 4 in which the fibres are pre-impregnated with a plastics matrix material before being drawn through the die.

7. A method according to any preceding claim in which the fibres are in the form of a woven web.

8. A method according to any one of claims 1 - 6 in which the fibres are in the form of a non-woven web.

9. A composite structural member produced according to the method of any preceding claim.

10. A composite structural member according to claim 9 comprising an aircraft skin stringer.

11. An aircraft aerofoil incorporating a composite structural member according to claim 9 or 10.

Fig.1.

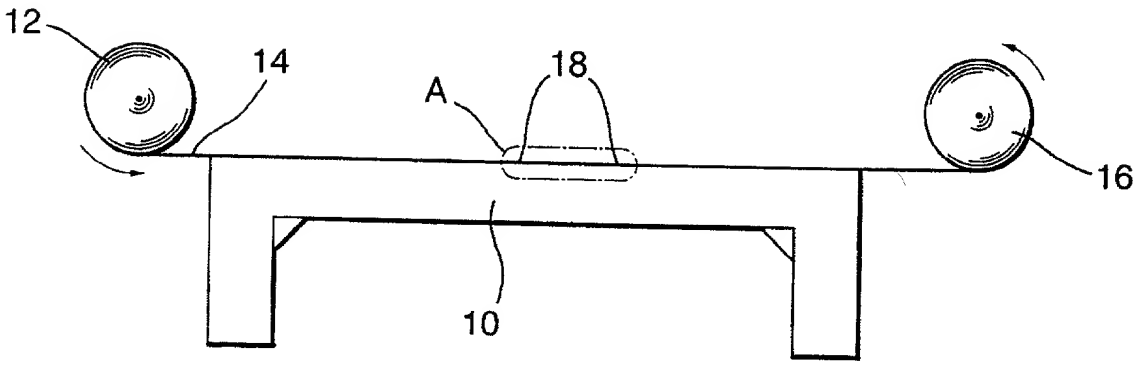


Fig.2a.

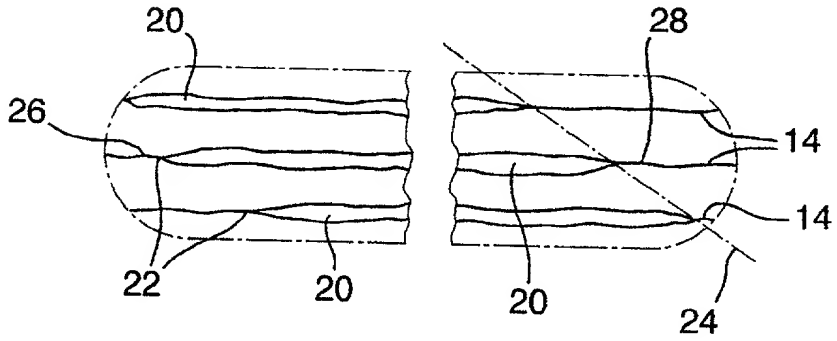


Fig.2b.

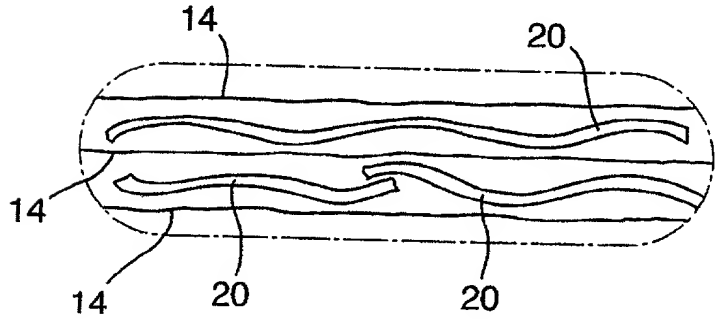
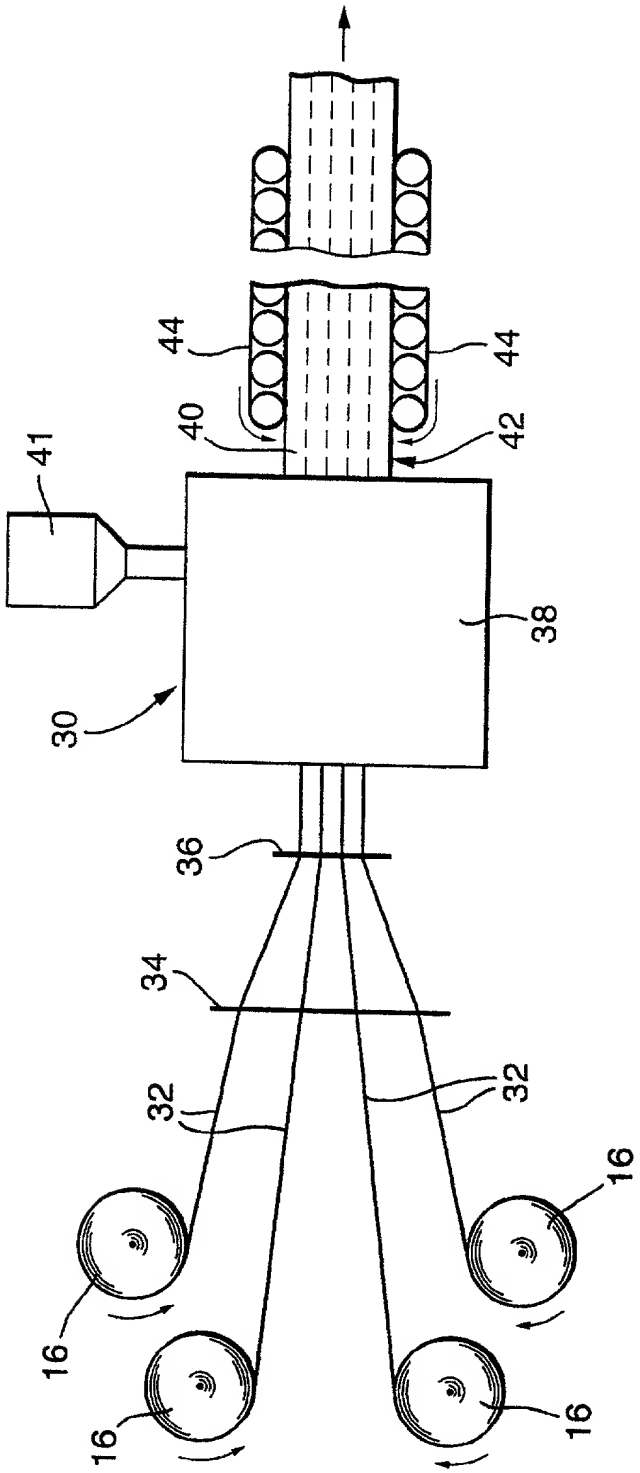


Fig.3.



RULE 63 (37 C.F.R. 1.63)
DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR PATENT APPLICATION
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that my residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name, and I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

FIBRE REINFORCED COMPOSITES

the specification of which (**check** applicable **box(s)**):

☐ is attached hereto
☐ was filed on _____ as U.S. Application Serial No. _____
☐ was filed as PCT International application No. _____ on _____
and (if applicable to U.S. or PCT application) was amended on _____

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above. I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the patentability of this application in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.56 I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119/365 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed or, if no priority is claimed, before the filing date of this application:

Priority Foreign Application(s):

Application Number	**Country**	**Day/Month/Year Filed**
9902584.3	GB	08/02/99

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number	**Date/Month/Year Filed**

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120/365 of all prior United States and PCT international applications listed above or below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in such prior applications in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in 37 C.F.R. 1.56 which occurred between the filing date of the prior applications and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

Prior U.S./PCT Application(s): Application Serial No.	**Day/Month/Year Filed**	**Status: patented pending, abandoned**

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon. And I hereby appoint **NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C., 1100 North Glebe Rd., 8th Floor, Arlington, VA 22201-4714, telephone number (703) 816-4000 (to whom all communications are to be directed)**, and the following attorneys thereof (of the same address) individually and collectively my attorneys to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and with the resulting patent: Arthur R. Crawford, 25327; Larry S. Nixon, 25640; Robert A. Vanderhye, 27076; James T. Hosmer, 30184; Robert W. Faris, 31352; Richard G. Besha, 22770; Mark E. Nusbaum, 32348; Michael J. Keenan, 32106; Bryan H. Davidson, 30251; Stanley C. Spooner, 27393; Leonard C. Mitchard, 29009; Duane M. Byers, 33363; Paul J. Henon, 33626; Jeffry H. Nelson, 30481; John R. Lastova, 33149; H. Warren Burnam, Jr. 29366; Thomas E. Byrne, 32205; Mary J. Wilson, 32955; J. Scott Davidson, 33489; Alan M. Kagen, 36178; William J. Griffin, 31260; Robert A. Molan, 29834; B. J. Sadoff, 36663; James D. Berquist, 34776; Updeep S. Gill, 37334.

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(Zip Code) BS99 7AR

2. Inventor's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Inventor: (first) MI (last) (citizenship)
Residence: (city) _____ (state/country) _____
Post Office Address: _____
(Zip Code) _____

FOR ADDITIONAL INVENTORS, check box ☐ and attach sheet with same information and signature and date for each.